

With No-one There

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With No-one There

by [WordsAblaze](#)

Summary

“Do you suffer from night terrors, Will?”

Will groans, slumping in his seat despite knowing that the action will be considered rude and ungraceful. “Is that not a diagnosis reserved for children?” he replies, more than a little bitter at the prospect of being infantilized by professionals yet again.

Hannibal hums. “Primarily. Although it can apply to any individual at any age. If you prefer, we can use the term ‘nightmares’.”

“Not much better,” Will mutters.

Notes

i really wanted to use 'solitary confinement' but the words wouldn't go so here's this,,,

day 3 prompts used: journal

See the end of the work for more [notes](#)

When he was younger, young enough to still hold his teachers to the highest of regards, Will had been instructed by one of many school counsellors to keep a journal.

He'd immediately dismissed the idea because of course he had, but, after a few more instances of waking up drenched in terror and sweat, he'd given it a chance. Several chances. In fact, he'd gotten into the habit of writing down his dreams every morning, whether it was jotting down a few words or writing enough to constitute a creative writing assignment.

Much to his own irritation, he'd begun to *enjoy* the act of writing his dreams—nightmares, usually—down, and he hadn't stopped until he'd returned home one day to find his father holding his little notebook.

Will's blood had frozen in his veins as his father slowly glanced between him and the notebook. "And what's the meaning of this?" his father had asked, none too kindly.

"To, uh, keep track of my... my dreams."

"Like a girl?" his father had demanded, suddenly far too close, looming over him.

Will had stumbled backwards, tripping over a loose floorboard and falling roughly against the wall behind him as his heart desperately threw itself against his ribs. "N—no. Just—just to help. With the nightmares."

His father had scoffed at him, disappointment heavy in the air between them. "Doing an awful job of it, then. And I won't have any more of this useless diary nonsense, hear me?"

Unable to argue with the fact that, although it had been enjoyable to write his dreams down, the act of doing so hadn't actually *stopped* them, Will had just nodded glumly. He never saw that notebook again. And he never dared to ask where it went.

Years later—following several new schools, countless nightmares, and one particularly concerned retail manager—Will was once again instructed to keep a journal.

This time, he hadn't just scoffed at the idea. Far more well-versed in the business of hiding things, Will had agreed to write his thoughts down in an attempt to therapeutically satisfy his manager and, more importantly, avoid losing his job.

It had worked far better than his first attempt, and, slowly—so very slowly—Will had begun to stop fearing his fragmented nightmares in favour of looking forward to piecing them together in his journal. Which, because good things never seemed to be fated for him, lasted all of a few months before one of his co-workers decided to break into his locker and photocopy his most recent entry on the noticeboard.

"Will, you know I like you but..." his manager had started awkwardly. And Will, taking pity on her because of course his most recent entry had been the violent kind, the kind that made everyone sneak glances at him with suspicion and mistrust, had just nodded and wordlessly gone about emptying his locker.

“I am sorry,” his manager said softly once he was halfway out of the door, “and I’ll make sure you get the full month’s pay since this is my fault.”

Will had merely shrugged. “They weren’t *your* messed up dreams.”

She couldn’t argue with that, and nor did she try to.

Suffice to say, Will stopped applying for jobs that involved more than bare minimum levels of social interaction. Disposing of the notebook himself this time—hurling it into the river with vengeance and a mournful look that he’d never admit to sporting—Will moves on, and forgets about the activity altogether.

That is, until Hannibal Lecter.

“Do you suffer from night terrors, Will?”

Will groans, slumping in his seat despite knowing that the action will be considered rude and ungraceful. “Is that not a diagnosis reserved for *children* ?” he replies, more than a little bitter at the prospect of being infantilized by professionals yet again.

Hannibal hums. “Primarily. Although it can apply to any individual at any age. If you prefer, we can use the term ‘nightmares’.”

“Not much better,” Will mutters, though he pulls himself upright; it’s only fair for him to be a little respectful in turn when Hannibal had graciously acknowledged his unease. “But, uh, better than the alternative. It’s not exactly... wrong, anyway.”

The smile on Hannibal’s face reminds Will of a landmine, for some reason. He doesn’t dwell on the connection, instead clearing his throat. “Before you ask, no, I will not fill out any kind of dream diary or whatever else you wish to call it for you to monitor and mock.”

“Mock?” Hannibal echoes, raising an eyebrow.

Will sighs, resisting the urge to slump into his seat again. He waves a hand dismissively. “Do you require a dictionary, Dr Lecter? I refuse to provide ammunition for teasing and blackmail. I am... open to any alternative suggestions.”

A moment of silence, after which Hannibal hums again, clearing letting Will’s thinly-veiled irritation slide. “Tell me, Will, what evidence do you have to suggest that I would attempt to blackmail you on the basis of a therapeutic activity?” When Will doesn’t reply, he adds: “Regardless, I can assure you there is nothing you could reveal to me that would lower my opinion of you or damage our relationship.”

“*Relationship* ?” Will echoes, bemused and only slightly annoyed by their sudden role reversal.

Hannibal, as infuriating as ever, only smirks. “You’ll find several dictionaries on the shelves behind you, and you are more than welcome to take your pick at any point in time.”

Will wonders if throwing one of said dictionaries at his psychiatrist's face would count as valid utilisation. He sighs, then springs to his feet, bypassing the shelves in favour of leaning against Hannibal's desk. "I won't keep a journal for you," he says quietly.

"It wouldn't be for *me*."

But Will just shakes his head, refusing to meet Hannibal's gaze or even look within a metre of it. "It would *end up* being for you. I... I don't have the best luck with that sort of thing."

Before Will can blink, Hannibal has somehow travelled the distance between them, and is leaning on the desk to his right, so close their hands could touch if he just flexed his fingers a little. He keeps his hand as still as possible.

"And what sort of thing *do* you have luck with?"

The question throws him off-guard, which, really, seems to be the aim of at least half of Hannibal's questions. Staring down at Hannibal's hand, Will shrugs. "I don't seem to have found anything yet."

Hannibal chuckles, but almost sadly. "A compromise, then. How does narrating just one of your dreams each session sound?"

"Tedious," Will replies honestly.

"A little," Hannibal agrees, and Will's head snaps up in shock. "But a necessary kind of tedious."

Swallowing his surprise, Will offers Hannibal a grateful smile. "Are you sure therapy can accommodate the juxtaposition?"

"For you, I believe such an adjustment is more than acceptable," Hannibal assures him, his own smile grateful in return, as if *Will* is the one doing him a favour somehow.

Will, in response, is filled with the urge to apologise, though he squashes that urge down before it can fester and reverse Hannibal's decision. A small part of him thinks that nothing he could do would *ever* reverse a Hannibal Lecter decision, but it's the only justification he can think of to avoid doubting himself.

"Thank you," he mumbles instead, and, noting the way Hannibal's little finger twitches ever so slightly towards his own, gets the bizarre feeling that Hannibal wants to turn the gratitude back on him.

End Notes

blame therapeutic boundaries for the missed opportunity for hand-holding >:(

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